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ABSTRACT

There seems to be little argument that the United States should have an education system that produces at least a minimum number of experts about other peoples, cultures, and languages, as well as professionals in business and government who can transact negotiations across national borders. Citizens should have the knowledge to comprehend and support government policies in an interconnected world. In 1978, the Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies examined the problem of building U.S. citizen competence in world affairs. It suggested that every state should establish an advisory council on Foreign Language and International Studies to advise and recommend ways to strengthen these fields in education. Currently, 16 states have taken action to enhance U.S. competence in world affairs. Despite the progress which has been made in internationalizing public instruction, much remains to be done. States must bolster requirements for teacher education by encouraging participation in international projects. Also, higher standards and priorities must be set for the teaching of international education and cultural heritage. These reforms will help prepare people for an increasingly interconnected world. (APG)

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# A BEGINNING:
# BUILDING GLOBAL COMPETENCE

By Rose L. Hayden

STATE EDUCATION LEADER

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# State education Leader

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# A Beginning: Building Global Competence

by Rose L. Hayden, *executive director, National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies.*

There seems to be little argument that our nation should have an education system that produces at least a minimum number of experts about other peoples, cultures and languages, as well as professionals in business and government who can transact negotiations across national borders. America should have scientists and technicians able to extend and share human knowledge around the globe. Our citizens should be knowledgeable enough to comprehend and support government decisions and policies in a dangerous and complicated world. But this is precisely what we do not have.

Few Americans truly appreciate the magnitude of the problem, and the response of the American education system to the challenge of preparing citizens for effective participation in a highly interconnected world is, in a word, underwhelming. Unless some major adjustments are made to compensate for its educational anachronisms, the United States may well lack the basic human resources to steer its ship of state through the uncharted but interdependent currents of the next decades. These facts speak for themselves:

- Fewer than 3% of today's high school graduates reach meaningful foreign language competence, and barely 8% of our colleges and universities re-

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quire a foreign language for entrance, compared with 34% in 1966. Only 1 out of 20 public high school students studies French, German or Russian beyond the second year. One in five high schools today offers no instruction whatsoever in any foreign language. The United States continues to be the only country on this shrunken planet where you can graduate from college without having studied one year of a foreign language.

- A national assessment of the world knowledge of high school seniors in 1979 showed that 40% thought Israel was an Arab nation. One study of school children's knowledge of other nations and peoples revealed that over 40% of the 12th graders surveyed could not locate Egypt correctly on a map, while more than 20% were equally unsure of the whereabouts of France or China.

- In 1980, as the rest of the world struggled to survive a faltering economy, closely linked with balance-of-payments problems and highly sensitive to deteriorating international trading patterns, a Roper poll revealed that 49% of Americans surveyed believed that foreign trade was either irrelevant or harmful to the nation. They held this conviction despite the fact that two of every five acres of farmland in this country produce directly for export, one of eight manufacturing jobs depends directly on foreign trade and fully 25% of our gross national product is involved in either exports or imports. Every billion dollars in exports supports 25,000 jobs; in 1982, 5 million jobs in America were supported by exports.

- While maintaining healthy trade abroad is clearly vital to our economic vigor, only 250 of America's 300,000 firms account for over 80% of our exports. Because relatively few American businessmen understand the cultures, customs or languages of their overseas buyers, America's competitive edge is blunted in international markets. Blunders abound. When General Motors produced its Chevrolet Nova, no one thought of Latin American sales. When spoken as two words in Spanish, "no va" means "it doesn't go." Datsun certainly does not market any vehicle in our country with the name "Lemon."

- Alarming similar handicaps pervade our government services at levels where one would expect full international competence. We are the only major nation in the world with no language requirement for entry into its foreign service. At one point, the European division of the Office of the Secretary of Defense employed some 80 persons to deal mainly with base site negotiations. None of the staff spoke either German or French.

Primary responsibility for formal education in the nation rests squarely with the 50 states. Unless they respond to the challenge of enhancing American competence in world affairs in the nation's schools, no credible advances can be expected.

### What States Are Doing

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed a Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies to examine the problem of building American competence in world affairs and to make appropriate recommendations. The commission's report, published in November 1979, caused many educators to rethink their priorities.

One of the principal recommendations forwarded by the president's commission report, *Strength Through Wisdom*, was that "every state should establish an Advisory Council on Foreign Language and International Studies to advise and recommend ways to strengthen these fields in their education systems." Roughly 10 states have taken such action to date, while about 6 others have previously acted legislatively and in other ways to realize this mandate. Leading the way are Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma and Oregon.

While each statewide report on initiative varies in its specificity and scope, reports tend to survey the national scene with respect to foreign language and international studies, focus on the economic trade and cultural dimensions of the particular state, and recommend actions to state and local authorities and educators. By and large, the reports have set lofty, far-reaching goals rather than specific objectives that can be put into operation. But, to the extent that statewide initiatives and surveys have business and political representation, these new reports have good odds of being visible to broader publics, and of being implemented.

While justice to the full range and richness of these reports cannot be achieved in brief synopses, a few examples do serve to give the flavor of what is being proposed:

- **Charges to commissions and task forces.** The Maine Advisory Council on Foreign Languages and International Studies, appointed in 1980, is charged with (1) examining the quantity and quality of instruction programs, (2) recommending ways to strengthen old programs and begin new ones, (3) identifying funding and community resources, (4) beginning public awareness programs, (5) holding local conferences to help educators and administrators evaluate needs and resources and (6) capitalizing on their professional resources to develop, fund and begin foreign language and international studies programs.

  In Iowa, a Governor's Task Force on Foreign Language Studies and International Education set up in November 1982 is working on (1) assembling information about current foreign language programs, (2) reviewing and selectively endorsing the recommendations of other task forces, (3) describing the importance of foreign language skills and (4) preparing objectives pinpointing the importance of such studies, increasing public awareness, enhancing teaching performance and promoting cooperation among educational institutions, business, and state and local governments.

- **Recommendations affecting state agencies.** In Florida, the Advisory Council on Global Education recommended (1) that the department of education establish a full-time career service position to lead and coordinate international education activities statewide; (2) that policies on requirements, programs and pedagogy be derived from local initiatives;

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## In This Issue:


*Page 1:* *Rose Hayden of the National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies offers a convincing argument for bolstering our nation's global competence.*

*Page 15:* *Allan Odden tells the exciting story of Don Robert's successful efforts to improve education in Arkansas with a voluntary program.*

*Page 6:* *Paul Bauman quotes young workers as they reflect on their high school preparation for work.*

*Page 4:* *Three postsecondary leaders, Norma Foreman Glasgow of Connecticut, John Folger of Tennessee and Marc Tucker of Washington, D.C., outline postsecondary education problems, offer solutions and issue challenges to state policy makers.*

*Centerfold:* *Three new ECS surveys put the spotlight on the states as they move to improve education.*



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The Education Commission of the States is a nonprofit, nationwide interstate compact formed in 1966. The primary purpose of the Commission is to help governors, state legislators, state education officials and others develop policies to improve the quality of education at all levels. Forty-eight states, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are members. The ECS central offices are at 1860 Lincoln Street, Suite 300, Denver, Colorado 80295. The Washington office is in the Hall of the States, 444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 248, Washington, D.C. 20001.

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(3) that a global/international dimension be considered for the teacher certification examination; (4) that the department of education consider assessing students' knowledge of the world in statewide social studies tests; (5) that criteria be developed for appropriate textbook selection; and (6) that the department lead in establishing local networks for global education.

In Oklahoma, the Task Force on Foreign Language Education suggested that the state board of education advertise the benefits of foreign language study, set up an advisory committee to monitor the progress of such study, require high schools to offer foreign language instruction and consider pilot-testing an international high school.

## Political Climate Good

Today's political climate is pushing educators across the land to define higher standards of excellence, especially for science and mathematics. National legislation, similar to the 1958 National Defense Education Act, includes foreign language study as a priority area. Over two dozen high-level councils and commissions have been examining schools toward this end, while several foundations have stated renewed philanthropic interest.

Thus, educators in all 50 states are grappling as never before with the challenge of internationalizing public education. Nevertheless, education change is a dynamic and complex phenomenon and does not easily lend itself to prescriptive analyses. Leadership, organizational structure and linkages, internal budget decisions and the political climate are key factors.

Clearly, success also depends upon having a comprehensive statewide strategy for change, a realistic assessment of the education needs and existing resources for international/intercultural education, some financial flexibility, a visible degree of bureaucratic and political clout and an effective outreach and dissemination system.

In most cases, statewide programs have not set time frames or specified ways to measure achievement, making it difficult to assess and evaluate international and intercultural programs. As a consequence, very little outcome information is available to justify international program budgets to state legislators. Other inhibitors range from unconvinced bureaucrats and state legislators to reluctant teachers and administrators. Not enough has been done to alter certification requirements, nor to encourage state agencies to work with colleges of teacher education to develop more effective international studies programs. Regrettably, relatively little, if any, state money is directly appropriated to international education projects.

## Winds of Change

Even a cursory glance at what the states are doing to enhance American competence in world affairs reveals specific activities too numerous to list here. Some highlights:

- Louisiana. The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), created in 1968 through Legislative Act 409, has undertaken ambitious and successful projects in elementary/secondary schools, maintains exchange agreements with France, Belgium and Quebec, and receives $1 million a year from the legislature for the foreign languages section of the state department of education to fund French instruction.
- Hawaii. A Governor's Advisory Council on Foreign Language and International Studies, composed of 16 business leaders, government officials and foreign language educators, is completing a report that inventories business, labor and local governmental needs, attitudes and activities in that state.
- Colorado. The Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers and Metropolitan State College received funding from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to outline a statewide program. Surveys of foreign language and international studies, as well as interviews with parents, civic and business leaders, were used to prepare recommendations.
- Oregon. As an outgrowth of its statewide commission, an Oregon International Council was established; it is composed of interested citizens from education, business, labor, civic and religious groups and exchange organizations. With the cooperation of the chancellor of higher education and with support from the state department of education, an Oregon Asian-Pacific Consortium has recently been set up.

- Illinois. The state department of education, responding to the Illinois Task Force on Foreign Language and International Studies, drew up a renewable five-year Illinois Plan for Language and International Studies, to begin major activities under the aegis of five regional advisory councils appointed by the state superintendent of education.
- New York. In July of 1983, the New York Board of Regents approved the following resolution: "All students, preferably in the early elementary years, but no later than by the time they complete grade 9, will acquire a basic functional proficiency in a language other than English. Secondary schools will provide sequential second language programs that are suited to the needs and abilities of all students; and, furthermore, as a condition for receiving a Regents high school diploma, students must demonstrate through examination a proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing a language other than English at a proficiency level of at least that required currently for Regents foreign language credit." Formal action on regulations is expected early in 1984.

## What Remains To Be Done

The gap between aspiration and achievement in internationalizing public instruction remains despite the progress and accomplishment noted in the earlier examples of successful projects. State departments of public instruction do not generally give international/intercultural goals high priority. More forceful leadership is needed if the 50 states are to take advantage of what already exists in the way of federal and local resources.

States must also take the lead in revamping requirements for teacher certification, in encouraging regional collaboration and in providing for adequate research and evaluation services to assess the impact of international and intercultural projects. Statewide efforts to design and implement teacher exchange programs and other overseas activities likewise would help to assure the budgets required for such ventures. State departments of education should also become more active in establishing and supporting information centers, curriculum consultants, inservice professional development centers and media projects to serve international and intercultural program needs. Those states that at present do not have full-time personnel to manage such programs should reconsider their policies in this area.

Educators and policy makers can set higher standards for textbooks and refuse to use texts that stereotype and abuse or ignore mankind's cultural diversity and fundamental dignity. Schools should encourage using lay teachers in the classroom: businessmen with international interests; state and county officials who deal in international aspects of local development; foreign students in the community; Americans knowledgeable about their cultural heritage in other parts of the world; retired diplomats; American college students studying other languages and cultures; and local school district members active with Rotary International, the United Nations Association, the Partners of the Americas, etc.

Key areas where active collaboration is likely to be both professionally and personally rewarding include curriculum development, dissemination, utilization of educational technologies, teacher preparation, statewide committees, professional standards, statewide mandates, research, and professional endorsements from instate and national associations.

## A Final Note

As the world's interrelatedness continues to make itself felt in the daily lives of the average American, educators will be pressured increasingly to respond to the challenge of preparing our citizens to cope with life as an interconnected and unstable global system. This need for dynamic educational change does not lurk in the misty reaches of the future. That far-off world of the future is with us now. ★

*The National Council on Foreign Language and International Studies (605 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10158), in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, is currently conducting a "Survey of State Education Agencies' Involvement in Foreign Language Instruction and International Studies." A report, to be published by the National Council, will document trends, provide useful information for state agencies and suggest strategies based upon successful practices in many states. Findings will be presented, in tabular state by-state form, in a future edition of* **State education Leader.**